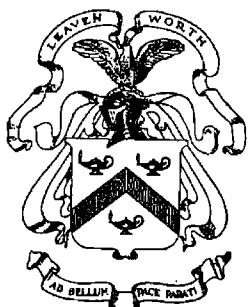


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Anzio beachhead, 22 January-
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ANZIO BEACHHEAD

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ANZIO BEACHHEAD

(22 January–25 May 1944)



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FOREWORD

In a nation at war, teamwork by the whole people is necessary for victory. But the issue is decided on the battlefield, toward which all national effort leads. The country's fate lies in the hands of its soldier citizens; in the clash of battle is found the final test of plans, training, equipment, and—above all—the fighting spirit of units and individuals.

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DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

Chief of Staff

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Historical Division

Washington 25, D. C.

1 October 1947

Anzio Beachhead, fourteenth in the series of studies of particular combat operations, is the story of how VI Corps of the American Fifth Army seized and held a strategic position far to the rear of the main fighting front, in the Italian campaign of 1944. Since VI Corps included British as well as American units, and the high command in Italy was in British rather than in American hands, the battle to maintain the Anzio beachhead was an Allied rather than an exclusively American operation. Essentially, this narrative of Anzio is confined to the first six weeks of bitter struggle to hold the beachhead against German attacks designed to drive the Allied forces from their foothold, a period which ended on 3 March. Thereafter, until the Allied offensive of May, the Anzio beachhead was a static and relatively quiet front. Then the beachhead forces spearheaded the drive that led to the capture of Rome. Only a sketch of this final and decisive phase of the Anzio operation is included in this narrative.

This study is based upon a first narrative by Capt. John Bowditch, III, prepared in the field from military records and from notes and interviews recorded during and after the operation by Captain Bowditch and by 1st Lt. Robert W. Komer. Although as published this book contains no documentation, the original narrative, fully documented, is on file in the War Department. Captain Bowditch's manuscript has been revised and extended with the help of additional information, including that obtained from enemy records, in the Historical Division, War Department Special Staff, by Maj. Roy Lamson, Jr., and by Dr. Stetson Conn. The maps were planned by Col. Allison R. Hartman of the Historical Division, and they were designed and drafted by the World War I Branch of the Division. The photographs were selected by Capt. Robert L. Bodell of the Historical Division. In order that the more definitive history of this operation may be as complete and correct as possible, readers are urged to send all comments, criticisms, and additional data to the Historical Division, Department of the Army, Washington 25, D. C.

Photographs in this book were obtained from the following sources: U.S. Air Forces, U.S. Navy, British War Office, Acme Newsphotos, Inc., International News Photos, Inc., Time, Inc., and special War Department files. All other photographs are from the U.S. Army Signal Corps. No photographs published herein, except official War Department pictures, may be reproduced in whole or in part without permission from the copyright owners.

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AFTER THE BATTLE. *The central square of Cisterna, 26 May 1944.*

THE ANZIO LANDING

(22-29 January)

In the early morning hours of 22 January 1944, VI Corps of Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army landed on the Italian coast below Rome and established a beachhead far behind the enemy lines. In the four months between this landing and Fifth Army's May offensive, the short stretch of coast known as the Anzio beachhead was the scene of one of the most courageous and bloody dramas of the war. The Germans threw attack after attack against the beachhead in an effort to drive the landing force into the sea. Fifth Army troops, put fully on the defensive for the first time, rose to the test. Hemmed in by numerically superior enemy forces, they held their beachhead, fought off every enemy attack, and then built up a powerful striking force which spearheaded Fifth Army's triumphant entry into Rome in June.

The story of Anzio must be read against the background of the preceding phase of the Italian campaign. The winter months of 1943-44 found the Allied forces in Italy slowly battering their way through the rugged mountain barriers blocking the roads to Rome. After the Allied landings in southern Italy, German forces had fought a delaying action while preparing defensive lines to their rear. The main defensive barrier guarding the approaches to Rome was the Gustav Line, extending

across the Italian peninsula from Minturno to Ortona. Enemy engineers had reinforced the natural mountain defenses with an elaborate network of pillboxes, bunkers, and mine fields. The Germans had also reorganized their forces to resist the Allied advance. On 21 November 1943, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring took over the command of the entire Italian theater; *Army Group C*, under his command, was divided into two armies, the *Tenth* facing the southern front and also holding the Rome area, and the *Fourteenth* guarding central and northern Italy. In a year otherwise filled with defeat, Hitler was determined to gain the prestige of holding the Allies south of Rome. (Map No. 1.)

Opposing the German forces was the Allied 15th Army Group, commanded by Gen. Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander, with the U.S. Fifth Army attacking on the western and the British Eighth Army on the eastern sectors of the front. In mid-December, men of the Fifth Army were fighting their way through the forward enemy defensive positions, which became known as the Winter Line.¹

¹An account of this operation is given in *Fifth Army at the Winter Line* (American Forces in Action Series, Military Intelligence Division, U.S. War Department), Washington, 1945.

THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD TERRAIN, looking northeast over the flat plain toward Velletri Gap. In the foreground is the town of Anzio. Nettuno is on the right. (Photo taken in September 1944.)



Braving the mud, rain, and cold of an unusually bad Italian winter, scrambling up precipitous mountain slopes where only mules or human pack-trains could follow, the Allied forces struggled to penetrate the German defenses. By early January, Fifth Army troops had broken through the Winter Line and had occupied the heights above the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers, from which they could look across to Mount Cassino, with Highway No. 6 curving around its base into the Liri Valley.

Before them were the main ramparts of the Gustav Line, guarding this natural corridor to the Italian capital. Buttressed by snow-capped peaks flanking the Liri Valley, and protected by the rain-swollen Garigliano and Rapido Rivers, the Gustav Line was an even more formidable barrier than the Winter Line. Unless some strategy could be devised to turn the defenses of the Gustav Line, Fifth Army faced another long and arduous mountain campaign.

Plan for a New Offensive

The strategy decided upon by the Allied leaders, an amphibious landing behind the Gustav Line, had been under consideration from the time when German intentions in Italy became clear. By late October 1943 it was evident that the Germans intended to compel the Allied forces to fight a slow, costly battle up the peninsula. To meet this situation, Allied staffs began to consider a plan for landing behind the enemy lines, with the purpose of turning the German flank, gaining a passage to the routes to Rome, and threatening the enemy lines of communication and supply. On the Eighth Army front, a small-scale amphibious landing at Termoli on 2-3 October 1943 furnished a pattern for such an attack.

On 8 November 1943 General Alexander ordered the Fifth Army to plan an amphibious landing on the west coast. The target date was set at 20 December. The landing, to be made by a single division, was to be the third phase of an over-all operation in Italy. In the first phase the Eighth Army was to carry out an offensive which would put it astride Highway No. 5, running from Pescara on the Adriatic coast through Popoli and Collarmele toward Rome. The second phase would be a Fifth Army drive up the Liri and Sacco Valleys to capture Frosinone. Dependent on the progress of the first two phases, a landing south of Rome directed toward Colli Laziali (the Albanese Mountains) would be made, to link up with the forces from the south. Because of tenacious German opposition and difficult terrain, the Eighth and Fifth Armies in the Winter Line campaign could not reach their assigned objectives. This situation, together with the lack of available landing craft, made the plan for an immediate amphibious end-run impracticable, and the project was abandoned on 20 December 1943.

The slow progress of the Allied advance led to the revival of the plan for an amphibious operation south of Rome along the lines previously contemplated. At Tunis on Christmas Day the chief Allied military leaders drafted new plans

for an amphibious landing below Rome with increased forces and the necessary shipping. Two divisions, plus airborne troops and some armor—over twice the force originally planned—were to make the initial assault between 20 and 31 January, but as near 20 January as possible to allow a few days latitude if bad weather should force postponement. The amphibious operation was again to be coordinated with a drive from the south, which would begin earlier. (Map No. 2.)

Main Fifth Army, reinforced by two fresh divisions from the quiescent Eighth Army front, was to strike at the German *Tenth Army* across the Garigliano and Rapido Rivers, breach the Gustav Line, and drive up the Liri Valley. This offensive was planned in sufficient strength to draw in most of the available German reserves. While the enemy was fully occupied in defending the Gustav Line, the surprise landing would be made in his rear at the twin resort towns of Anzio and Nettuno, about thirty miles south of Rome. Once established, the assault force was to thrust inland toward the volcanic heights of Colli Laziali. The capture of Colli Laziali would block vital enemy supply routes and threaten to cut off the German troops holding the Gustav Line. The Allied leaders believed that the Germans lacked sufficient strength to meet attacks on two fronts and that they would be forced to rush troops northward to meet the grave threat to their rear. Thus weakened, the Germans could be forced to withdraw up the Liri Valley from their Gustav Line positions. Eighth Army, though depleted of two divisions which were to go to the Fifth Army front, was to make a show of force along its front in order to contain the maximum number of enemy forces. If possible, Eighth Army would reach Highway No. 5 and develop a threat toward Rome through Popoli by 20 January. Main Fifth Army was to follow up the anticipated enemy withdrawal as quickly as possible, link up with the beachhead force, and drive on Rome.

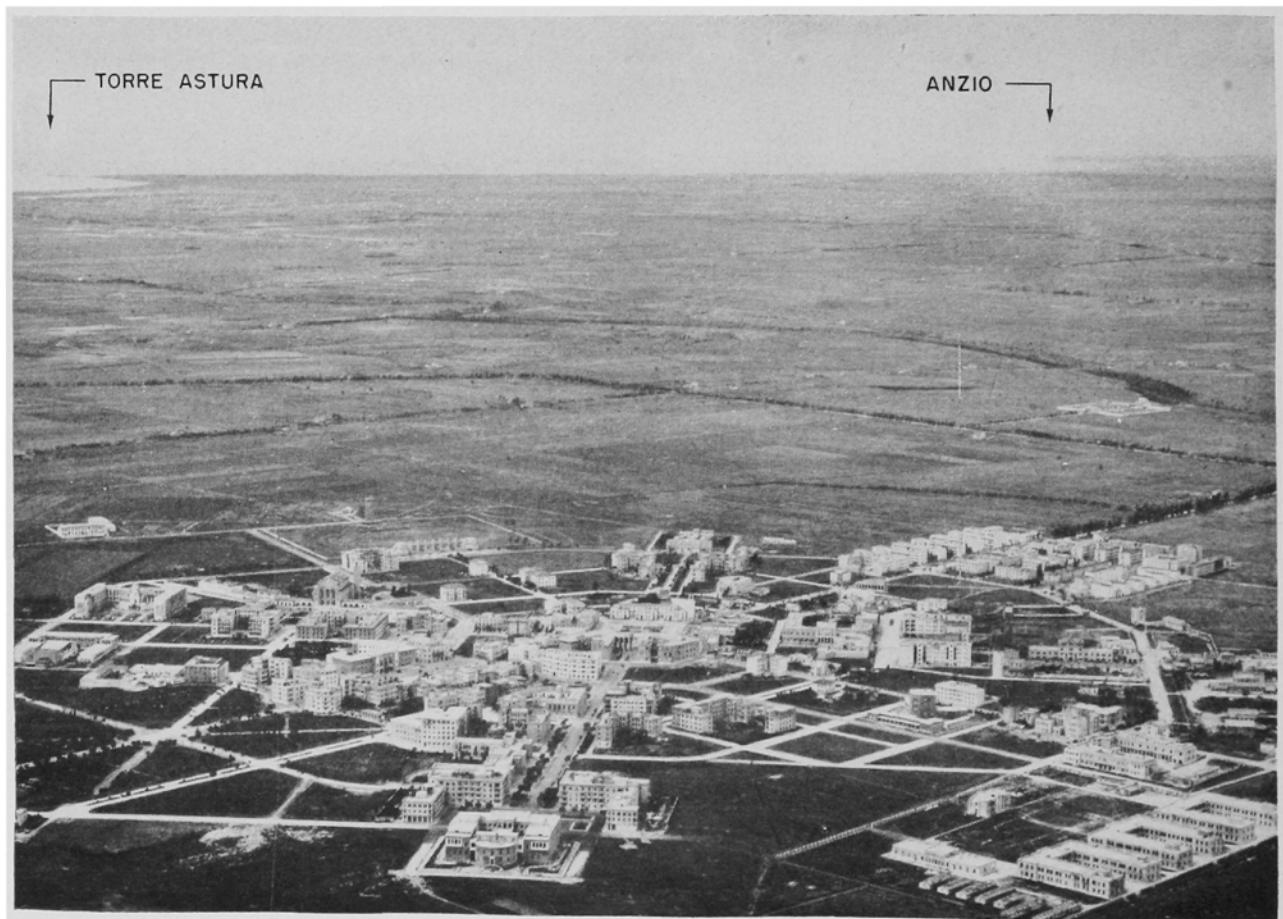
The area chosen for the amphibious landing was a stretch of the narrow Roman coastal plain extending north from Terracina across the Tiber River. (Map No. 3.) Southeast of Anzio this plain

is covered by the famous Pontine Marshes; northwest toward the Tiber it is a region of rolling, often wooded, farm country. The 3,100-foot hill mass of Colli Laziali lies about twenty miles inland from Anzio and guards the southern approaches to Rome. (Map No. 21.) Highway No. 7 skirts the west side of Colli Laziali; on the southeast the mountains fall away into the low Velletri Gap leading inland toward Highway No. 6 at Valmontone. The main west-coast railways parallel these highways. On the east side of the Velletri Gap rise the peaks of the Lepini Mountains which stretch along the inner edge of the Pontine Marshes toward Terracina.

An area roughly seven miles deep by fifteen miles wide around Anzio was to form the initial

Allied beachhead. (Map No. 3.) Its 26-mile perimeter was considered the maximum which could be held by the initial assault force and yet include the best natural features for defense. In the sector northwest of Anzio the beachhead was bounded by the Moletta River. Here the low coastal plain was cut up by a series of rough-hewn stream gullies, the largest of them formed by the Moletta and the Incastro Rivers running southwest from the higher ground inland toward the sea. These gullies, though their small streams were easily fordable, were often fifty feet deep and offered difficult obstacles to armor. In the central beachhead sector, east of the first overpass on the Anzio-Albano road, the line ran 6,000 yards across a broad stretch of almost level open fields to meet the west branch

LITTORIA AND THE RIGHT FLANK of the beachhead, viewed from the air. The Mussolini Canal flows from right to left across the terrain shown in this photo, about one-third of the distance between Littoria and Anzio. The Factory (Aprilia) was very similar in structure, and built about the same time as Littoria.



of the Mussolini Canal below the village of Padiglione. This stretch of open country leading inland along the Albano road formed the best avenue of approach into or out of the beachhead and was to be the scene of major Allied and German attacks.

Between Cisterna and Littoria the plain merged with the northern edge of the Pontine Marshes, a low, flat region of irrigated fields interlaced with an intricate network of drainage ditches. The treeless, level expanse offered scant cover for troops, and during the rainy season the fields were impassable to most heavy equipment. From Padiglione east the entire right flank of the initial beachhead line was protected by the Mussolini Canal, which drains the northern edge of the Pontine Marshes. The line ran east along the west branch of the canal to its intersection with the main branch and from there down the main branch to the sea. The canal and the Pontine Marshes made the beachhead right flank facing Littoria a poor avenue of attack; this flank could be held with a minimum of forces.

Most of the beachhead area was within an elaborate reclamation and resettlement project. The low, swampy, malarial bogland of the Pontine Marshes had been converted into an area of cultivated fields, carefully drained and irrigated by an extensive series of canals and pumping stations. Only in the area immediately north of Anzio and Nettuno had the scrub timber, bog, and rolling grazing land been left untouched. At regular intervals along the network of paved and gravel roads crisscrossing the farmlands were the standardized 2-story *podere*, or farmhouses, built for the new settlers. Such places as the new community center of Aprilia, called the "Factory" by Allied troops, and the provincial capital of Littoria, were modernistic model towns. The twin towns of Anzio (ancient Antium) and Nettuno in the center of the beachhead were popular seaside resorts before the war.

The plan for the landing was called SHINGLE. Originally conceived as a subsidiary operation on the left flank of an advancing Fifth Army, it developed, when main Fifth Army failed to break the



MAJ. GEN. JOHN P. LUCAS
Commanding General, VI Corps

mountain defenses in the south, into a major operation far in the enemy rear. U.S. VI Corps, selected by General Clark to make the amphibious landing, employed British as well as American forces under the command of Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas. The assault force was to be dispatched from Naples, and was to consist of the U.S. 3d Division, veteran of landings in Sicily and North Africa, the British 1 Division from the Eighth Army front, the 46 Royal Tank Regiment, the 751st Tank Battalion, the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Commandos, Rangers, and other supporting troops. This force was the largest that could be lifted by the limited number of landing craft available. It was estimated that the turnaround would require three days. As soon as the convoy returned to Naples, the U.S. 45th Division and the U. S. 1st Armored Division (less Combat Command B), were sent as reinforcements.

The final plans for SHINGLE were completed and approved on 12 January. D Day was set for

22 January; at H Hour (0200), VI Corps was to land over the beaches near Anzio and Nettuno in three simultaneous assaults. On the right, the 3d Division, under Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., would land three regiments in assault over X-Ray Red and Green Beaches, two miles below Nettuno.² In the center, the 6615th Ranger Force (Provisional) of three battalions, the 83d Chemical Battalion, and the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion would come in over Yellow Beach, a small beach adjacent to Anzio harbor, with the mission of seizing the port and clearing out any coastal defense batteries there. On Peter Beach, six miles northwest of Anzio, the 2 Brigade Group of the British 1 Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. W. R. C. Penney, would make the assault; the 2 Special Service Brigade of 9 and 43 Commandos would land with it and strike east to establish a road block on the main road leading from Anzio to Campoleone and Albano. All these forces would link up to seize and consolidate a beachhead centering on the port of Anzio. (Map No. 3.)

The assault plan assumed the possibility of initial heavy resistance on the beaches, and the certainty of heavy counterattacks once the enemy was fully aware of the extent of the landing. Consequently, VI Corps held out a strong reserve and placed great emphasis on digging in early at initial objectives to repel armored counterattacks. The bulk of the 1 Division, with the 46 Royal Tank Regiment, the 24 Field Regiment, and the 80 Medium Regiment attached, was to remain on shipboard as a floating reserve. The 504th Parachute Infantry would land behind the 3d Division and also assemble in Corps reserve. Up to a few days before the landing, it had been intended to drop the paratroopers behind the beaches. This drop was called off because its objective was about the same as that of the 1 Division, and because dropping before H Hour might prematurely reveal the main assault. A drop at H Hour itself might

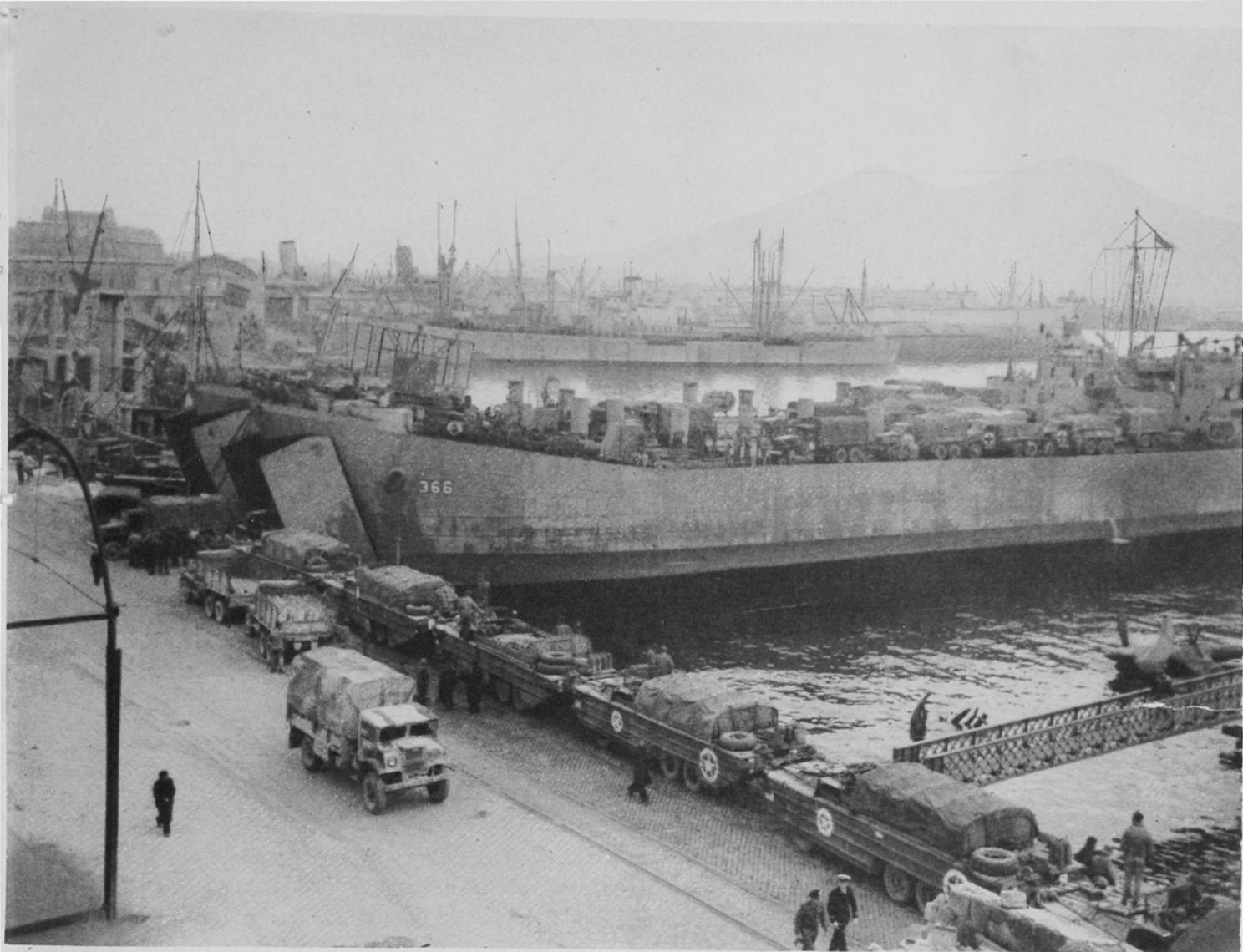
²Attached: 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 751st Tank Battalion; 441st AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion; Battery B, 36th Field Artillery Regiment (155-mm. gun); 69th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm. self-propelled howitzer); and 84th Chemical Battalion (motorized).

incur the danger of being fired on by Allied artillery if enemy planes should attack at the same time.

The Allied High Command expected that a landing in strength to the rear of *XIV Panzer Corps*, opposing main Fifth Army on the Cassino front, would be considered an emergency to be met by all the resources of the German High Command in Italy. From the latest intelligence available on enemy troops in the Rome area, Army G-2 estimated that VI Corps could expect an initial D Day resistance from one division assigned to coast watching, four parachute battalions from Rome, a tank and an antitank battalion, and miscellaneous coast defense personnel, totaling 14,300 men. By D plus 1, another division, an SS infantry regiment from north of Rome, a regimental combat team from *XIV Panzer Corps* reserve, and perhaps elements of the *Hermann Goering Panzer Division* could arrive. By D plus 2 or 3 the enemy might have appreciated that the Allies had weakened the Eighth Army front; if so, he could bring the 26th Panzer Division from that sector to produce a total build-up of 31,000 men. If the Fifth Army attack in the south were sufficiently powerful and sustained, it should pin down all enemy reserves in that area. G-2 did not believe that the Germans could bring down reinforcements quickly from northern Italy, especially in the face of overwhelming Allied air superiority. Probable build-up from north of Florence was estimated to be not more than two divisions by D plus 16. The final summary by G-2, Fifth Army, on 16 January pointed out the increasing attrition of enemy troops:

Within the last few days there have been increasing indications that enemy strength on the Fifth Army front is ebbing, due to casualties, exhaustion, and possibly lowering of morale. One of the causes of this condition, no doubt, has been the recent, continuous Allied attacks. From this it can be deduced that he has no fresh reserves and very few tired ones. His entire strength will probably be needed to defend his organized defensive positions.

In view of the weakening of enemy strength on the front as indicated above, it would appear doubtful if the enemy can hold the organized defensive line through

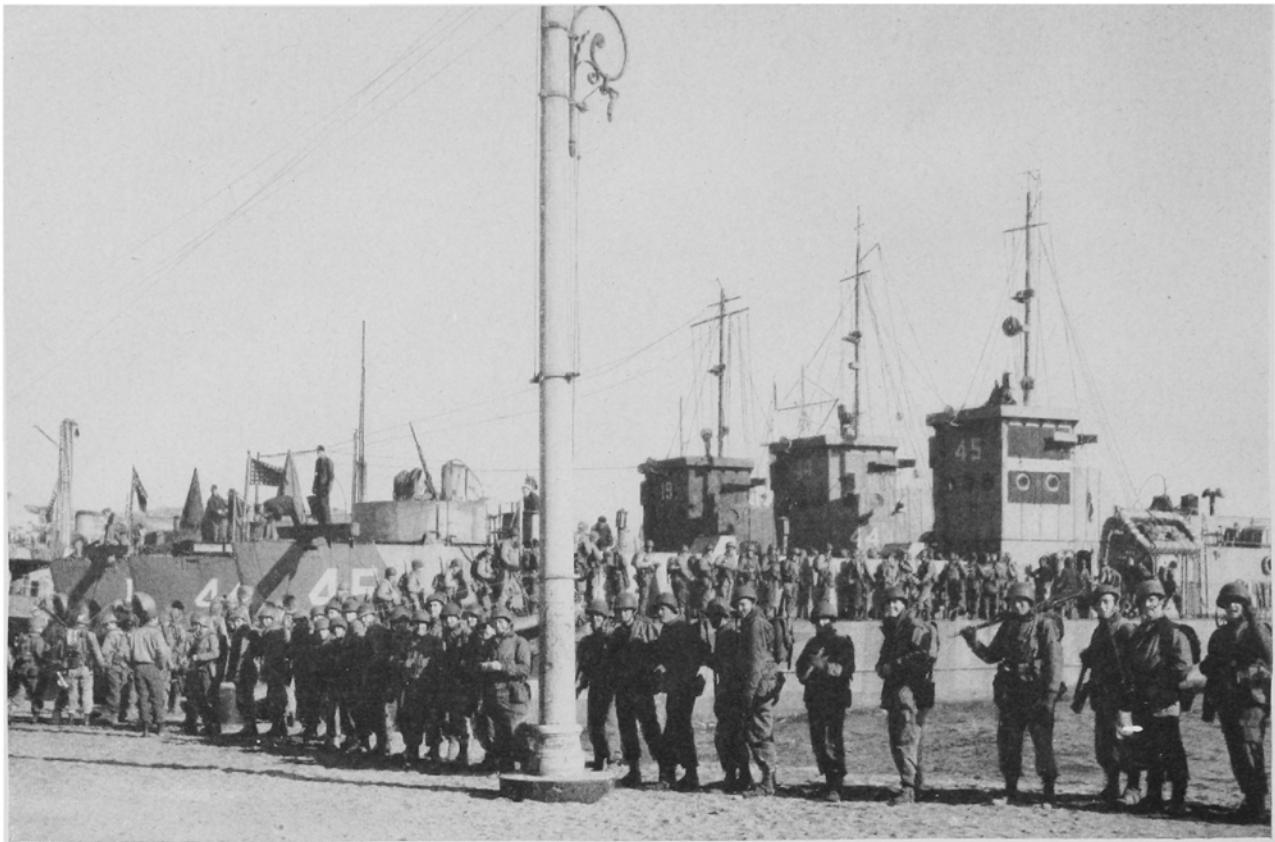


PRELOADED SUPPLY TRUCKS AND DUKW's at Naples on 18 January are loaded aboard LST's. This novel supply method was getting its first Mediterranean battle test in the Anzio beachhead operation.

Cassino against a co-ordinated army attack. Since this attack is to be launched before Shingle, it is considered likely that this additional threat will cause him to withdraw from his defensive position once he has appreciated the magnitude of that operation.

Whatever the enemy resistance and coast defenses might be, two natural obstacles, bad weather and poor beaches, made a landing at Anzio in January extremely hazardous. The winter

rainy season was the worst time of year to launch an amphibious assault. Rain, low clouds, and high seas promised to complicate the problem of supply over the beaches and to hamper air support. The beaches themselves, much shallower than those at Salerno, had the added disadvantage of two offshore sandbars. The Navy estimated that only smaller craft such as LCVP's, LCA's, and DUKW's could be landed with any reasonable



TROOPS FILING ABOARD AT NAPLES for the invasion were in a happy frame of mind when this picture was taken. A part of the 6615th Ranger Force (Provisional), they were transported to Anzio aboard the stubby LCI's shown in the background.

hope of success.³ These risks had to be accepted, although special precautions could be taken to minimize their effect. Since the weather promised only two good days out of seven, the assault convoy was to be combat-loaded for complete discharge within two days; to permit larger craft to unload over the shallow beaches, pontons were to be carried to serve as mobile piers; and to decrease the turnaround time of craft, the novel method of loading LST's with preloaded supply trucks was to be used for the first time in the

Mediterranean Theater. The trucks were to load at Naples, drive onto the LST's, and drive off again at Anzio. It was hoped that the small port of Anzio could be captured before the enemy had time to demolish it. Its capture intact would help to ease the grave problem of supply over open and exposed beaches.

To protect the establishment of the beachhead an elaborate air program in two phases was projected. Prior to D Day the Tactical Air Force would bomb enemy airfields to knock out the German Air Force, and would seek to cut communications between Rome and the north which enemy reinforcements might use. The Strategic Air Force would assist in these tasks. Then, from D Day on, every effort would be made to isolate the beachhead from enemy forces by maintaining air superiority over the beachhead, bombing bridges and road transport, and attacking enemy columns or troop concentrations within striking distance.

³The naval craft referred to by abbreviations in this and subsequent chapters are identified as follows:

DUKW	—Amphibious Truck
LCA	—Landing Craft, Assault
LCI	—Landing Craft, Infantry
LCT	—Landing Craft, Tank
LCT (R)	—Landing Craft, Tank (Rocket)
LCVP	—Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel
LSI	—Landing Ship, Infantry
LST	—Landing Ship, Tank

For this program much of the strength of the Tactical Air Force would be available, and assistance from other Allied air power in the Mediterranean Theater would be on call. Support would be drawn from some 2,600 Allied aircraft in Italy, Corsica, and Sardinia, representing an overwhelming superiority over available German air power. XII Air Support Command, under Maj. Gen. E. J. House, reinforced by two groups from the Desert Air Force, would provide direct air support, while the Tactical Bomber Force flew heavier missions. The Coastal Air Force would give day and night fighter cover to the mounting area at Naples and halfway up the convoy route. From here on the 64th Fighter Wing would cover the battle area. A total of 60 squadrons (23½ fighter, 6 fighter-bomber, 4 light bomber, 24 medium bomber, and 2½ reconnaissance) would directly support the ground effort. Enemy air power was not considered a major threat. By early January almost the entire long-range bomber force of the *Second German Air Force*, under General Baron von Richthofen, had disappeared from Italian fields. It was believed that Allied attacks on enemy bases would reduce the remaining German air strength by 60 percent. It was not considered likely that the German Air Force would reinforce its units in Italy to meet SHINGLE, so the enemy air effort, never strong, should gradually diminish.

Rear Admiral F. J. Lowry, USN, commander of Task Force 81, was charged with the responsibility of mounting, embarking, and landing the ground forces and with the subsequent support of this force until it was firmly established ashore. His assault convoy numbered 2 command ships,

4 Liberties, 8 LSI's, 84 LST's, 96 LCI's, and 50 LCT's, escorted by cruisers, destroyers, and a host of lesser craft. It was divided into two groups, Task Force X-Ray under Admiral Lowry to lift the American troops, and Task Force Peter under Adm. T. H. Troubridge, RN, for British troops.⁴

Since only sixteen 6-davit LST's were available, the eight LSI's had been assigned to provide additional assault craft. Even with this addition, LCI's would have to be used for follow-up waves over X-Ray Beach. Peter Beach was so shallow that only light assault craft could be used.

Task Force X-Ray was further divided into several functional groups: a control group of two flagships; a sweeper group to clear a mine-free channel; and an escort group for antiaircraft and submarine protection. A beach identification group was designated to precede the assault craft, to locate the beaches accurately, and mark them with colored lights. Then three craft groups would land the assault waves. Following the first wave, the 1st Naval Beach Battalion would improve the marking of beach approaches and control boat traffic. A salvage group was assigned to lay ponton causeways after daylight for unloading heavier craft. Back at Naples a loading control group would handle berthing and loading of craft.

To gain surprise no preliminary naval bombardment of the beaches was ordered, except a short intense rocket barrage at H minus 10 to H minus 5 minutes by three LCT(R)'s. An important assignment, however, was given to a naval task force which was to deliver a feint at H Hour of D Day by bombarding Civitavecchia, north of Rome, and by carrying out dummy landings.

*The naval craft were assigned as follows:

Task Force "Peter" (British)

- 1 Hq ship
- 4 cruisers
- 8 Fleet destroyers
- 6 Hunt destroyers
- 2 antiaircraft ships
- 2 Dutch gunboats
- 11 fleet mine sweepers
- 6 small mine sweepers
- 4 landing craft, gun

749540°—48—2

4 landing craft, flak
4 landing craft tank (rocket)

Task Force "X-Ray" (American)

- 1 Hq ship
- 1 cruiser
- 8 destroyers
- 2 destroyer escorts
- 6 mine sweepers
- 12 submarine chasers (173')
- 20 submarine chasers (110')
- 18 motor mine sweepers
- 6 repair ships



The Germans foresaw the possibility of an Allied landing behind the Gustav Line, and strengthened the coastal positions that were in the most likely invasion areas as best they could with the limited number of troops at their disposal. Since it considered the number of German troops in Italy barely sufficient to hold the southern front and strengthen the rear areas, the German High Command in December 1943 worked out an elaborate plan to reinforce German troops in Italy with units from France, Germany, and Yugoslavia in the event of an Allied landing. Thus it was that while the Germans realized that they did not have available sufficient forces to prevent an Allied landing

behind the Gustav Line, they believed that they could contain and then destroy it by hurrying reinforcements into Italy to meet the emergency. Their plans did not contemplate the withdrawal of any substantial number of troops from the southern front to meet such a threat to their rear.

The bitter and continuous struggle along the southern front from November 1943 into January 1944 forced the enemy to commit all of his divisions that were fit for combat to stop the Allied offensive at the Gustav Line. A lull in the fighting in early January permitted the strengthening of forces in the Rome area to resist an invasion. Under the command of *I Parachute Corps*, the 29th and

90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions were assigned to the Rome coastal sector; the *Herman Goering Panzer Division* was held as a mobile reserve between Rome and the southern front. But when the American Fifth Army attacked across the Garigliano on 18 January, the Germans rushed the 29th and 90th *Panzer Grenadier Divisions* southward. On the eve of the Anzio landing, the Germans had almost denuded the Rome area of combat troops in order to stem the Allied drive in the south. They had observed the regrouping of Allied troops and Allied naval preparations in the Naples area; and they believed that the Allies had sufficient strength both to maintain the offensive along

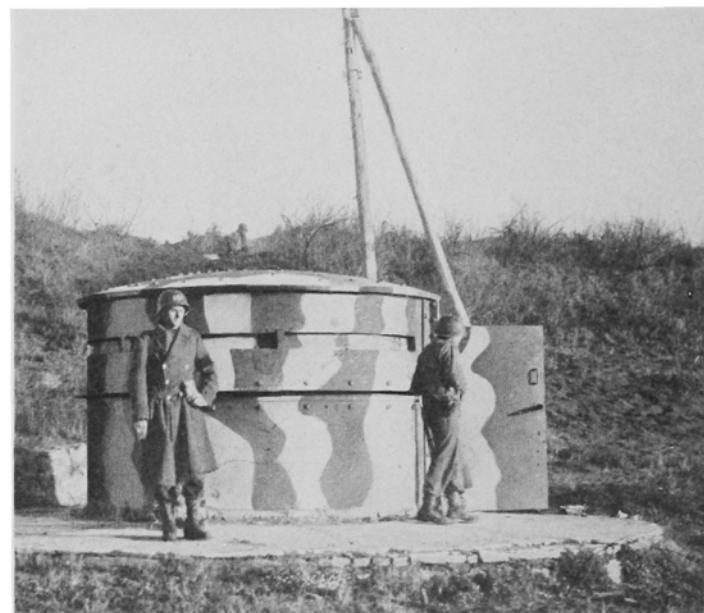
the main fighting front and to attempt a landing in the Rome area. But they hoped to delay such an invasion by counterattacking in the south; then, after stopping the Allies on the Garigliano, they would draw back enough troops to check a landing.

The Assault

In early January, VI Corps troops assembled in the Naples area to embark on a short but strenuous amphibious training program. Night operations and physical conditioning through speed marches were stressed. Infantry battalions practiced special beach assault tactics, landings under simulated

THE ANZIO LANDING was virtually unopposed. These scenes, photographed at Yellow Beach soon after dawn on 22 January, show troops of the 3d Division (left) as they waded the last few yards to shore and (below) a line of vehicles moving inland. White tape indicates boundary of the path to which vehicles were confined by soft ground in the area.





ENEMY COASTAL DEFENSES were sparse and mostly unmanned. These four photos, all taken in the Nettuno area, show the type of defenses the Germans had set up. The cannon is an obsolete model.

fire, removing mine fields and barbed wire, and knocking out pillboxes on the beach. Artillerymen learned the knack of loading and unloading DUKW-borne 105-mm. howitzers. Assault landings were practiced and re-practiced, first from mock-ups on dry land and then in battalion and regimental landing exercises with craft provided by the Navy. The program culminated in WEBFOOT, a Corps landing exercise lasting from 17

to 19 January on the beaches south of Salerno.⁵

As D Day approached, massed squadrons of medium and heavy bombers roared out toward

⁵During the WEBFOOT exercise the 3d Division lost one battalion of field artillery due to DUKW's swamping when put into the sea too far off shore during bad weather. This illustrates the absolute necessity for proper loading and trained crews in the use of this type of equipment. Very few men were drowned, but the DUKW's and all equipment went to the bottom. This battalion was replaced by a battalion of the 45th Division before the 3d Division sailed for Anzio.

northern Italy to strike the first blow in the new offensive. Their role was to choke off the vulnerable Italian rail and highway routes down which enemy supplies and reinforcements could flow toward the beachhead and the southern front. Shifting their weight from one main line to another, Fortresses, Liberators, Mitchells, Marauders, and Wellingtons hammered at key bridges and railroad yards from Rome north to the Brenner Pass. Closer to the front, fighters and light bombers strafed and bombed transport on the rail and highway nets. Finally, a few days before the landing, heavy bombers flew missions against key airfields in Italy and southern France to forestall any interference from the Luftwaffe with the Anzio assault.

While the Anzio landing was still in preparation, main Fifth Army began its southern drive. At dawn on 12 January, troops of the French Expeditionary Corps surged forward in the mountains above Cassino. While the French sought to turn the German left flank above Cassino, the British 10 Corps struck across the lower Garigliano to pierce the other flank of the Gustav Line. In spite of successive assaults neither the British nor the French were able to break through the rock-ribbed wall of German mountain defenses. In the center, on 20 January, the U.S. II Corps attacked in an effort to cross the Rapido and secure a bridgehead. After gaining a precarious foothold in two days of bitter fighting, heavy losses forced it to withdraw. By 22 January, D Day for the Anzio landing, the attack on the Gustav Line had bogged down in the midst of savage German counterattacks. Although Fifth Army had not succeeded in driving up the Liri Valley, the battle for Cassino continued and the Germans had been forced to commit most of *Tenth Army's* reserves. High hopes were still held that the Anzio landing would break the stalemate in the Liri Valley.

During the third week in January, Naples and its satellite ports were the scene of feverish activity as troops and supplies were loaded on a convoy of more than 250 ships and craft. Long lines of waterproofed vehicles rolled down to the docks and

troops filed aboard the waiting ships. As dawn colored the hills above the Bay of Naples on 21 January, the first ships slipped their hawsers and the convoy sailed.

It had been impossible to conceal craft concentrations in the Naples area, but elaborate efforts were made to deceive the enemy as to the time and place of the assault, which might fall anywhere from Gaeta to Leghorn. The convoy plowed north from Naples at a steady 5-knot pace, swinging wide on a roundabout course to deceive the enemy as to its destination and to avoid mine fields. Allied air raids, however, had temporarily knocked out the German reconnaissance base at Perugia, and not an enemy plane was sighted in the sunlit sky. Mine sweepers cleared a channel ahead, destroyers and cruisers clung to the flanks to ward

LT. GEN. MARK W. CLARK, *Commanding General of the Fifth Army, arriving at the beachhead on D Day morning in a Navy PT boat. He is shown reading radio dispatches on the battle's progress with a Fifth Army Staff officer.*





A DESTROYED MUSSOLINI CANAL BRIDGE near Borgo Sabotino, part of the reconnaissance effort on the right flank on D Day. Photo, taken later, shows a treadway bridge over the canal, concrete road blocks (German) on the far side, and a trench system dug by American forces.

off U-boats, and an air umbrella of fighters criss-crossed constantly. Actually, these elaborate precautions were hardly necessary, for the enemy air reconnaissance failed to observe either the embarkation at Naples or the approach of VI Corps to Anzio. Aboard the convoy men lolled about the decks, sleeping or sunbathing, checking equipment, or excitedly discussing what they would find. As night fell and darkness cloaked the convoy's movements, it swung sharply in toward Anzio.

At five minutes past midnight on 22 January, in the murky blackness off Cape Anzio, the assault convoy dropped anchor and rode easily on a calm Mediterranean Sea. There was a murmur of subdued activity as officers gave last-minute instructions, men clambered into stubby assault craft,

and davits swung out and lowered them to the sea. Patrol boats wove in and out of the milling craft herding them into formation, and then led the first waves away into the moonless night.

To gain surprise the guns of the escorting warships kept silent. Then, just ten minutes before H Hour (0200), a short, terrific rocket bombardment from two British LCT(R)'s burst with a deafening roar along the beach. These newly developed rocket craft, each carrying 798 5-inch rockets, were employed to disorganize any possible enemy ambush, explode mine fields along the beach, and destroy enemy beach defenses. But the attackers saw no burst of answering fire; when the rocket ships ceased firing, the shore again loomed dark and silent ahead.

As the first wave of craft hit the beach and men rushed for the cover of the dunes behind, there was no enemy to greet them. Pushing rapidly inland the astonished troops soon realized that the highly unexpected had happened. They had caught the enemy completely off guard. Although the Germans knew an amphibious landing was impending, they believed that it would not occur until somewhat later. The two divisions that had been assigned to guard this coast had been sent to the southern front only three days before, and the coastal sector and area south of Rome were held by only skeleton forces. Consequently, except for a few small coast artillery and antiaircraft detachments, the only immediate resistance to the Anzio landing came from scattered elements of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division. Only three engineer companies and the 2d Battalion, 71st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, had been left to guard the coast from the mouth of the Tiber River through Anzio to the Mussolini Canal; one 9-mile stretch of the coast was occupied by a single company. Furthermore, the troops in the Anzio area had not been warned that an Allied landing was imminent. The coastal defenses were limited to scattered mine fields along Peter Beach used by the British 1 Division; some pillboxes, most of which were not even manned; and scattered artillery pieces—a few 88's and several old Italian,

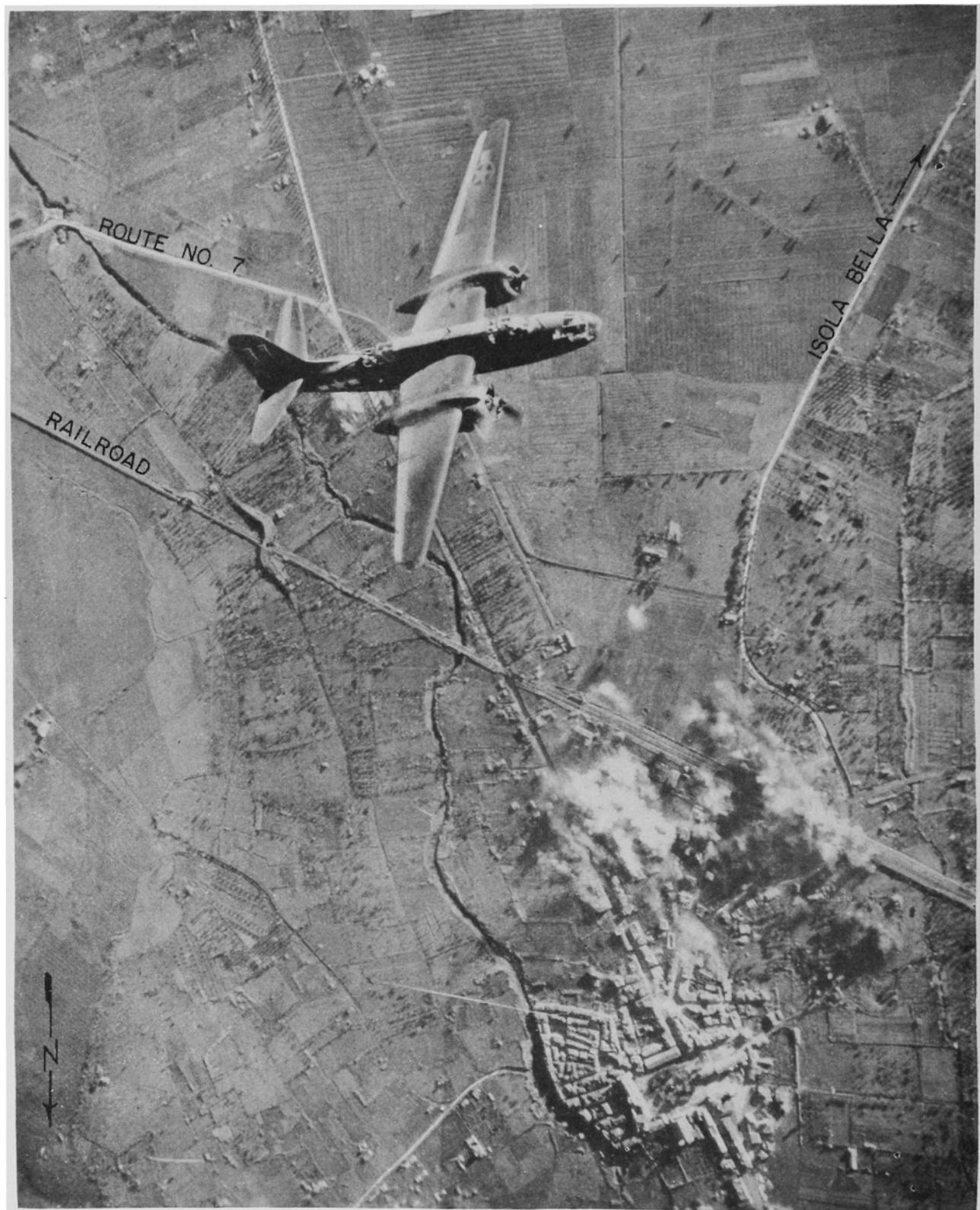
French, and Yugoslav pieces—most of which were not even fired against the attackers.

Aided by a calm sea and the virtual absence of opposition, the invaders quickly established themselves on shore. (Map No. 3.) On the right, the 3d Division swept in over the beaches east of Nettuno. Brushing aside a few dazed enemy patrols, they pushed rapidly inland, established themselves on the initial phase line, and dug in to repel any counterattack. General Clark, accom-

panied by Brig. Gen. Donald W. Brann and other members of the Fifth Army Staff, arrived at the beachhead in a Navy PT boat, transferred to a DUKW, and landed at 1000. Motorized patrols of the 3d Reconnaissance and Provisional Reconnaissance Troops forged ahead to seize and blow the bridges over the Mussolini Canal which ran along the right flank. Only at the southernmost bridge did they meet any Germans. Here they knocked out three armored cars with bazookas,

ENGINEERS CLEARING DEMOLITION CHARGES IN ANZIO on D Day. *The Germans failed to carry out their plans to destroy the port. Explosives, such as these men of the 36th Engineers are seen removing had been set so that buildings would topple into the streets, and thus hinder use of port facilities.*





AN AIR ATTACK ON CISTERNA by medium bombers shows smoke and dust rising from bomb hits on enemy installations and the railroad just south of the town. Note the narrow, winding Cisterna Creek directly below plane.

killing or capturing eleven of the enemy patrol.

The Ranger Force landed over the small beach just to the right of Anzio harbor and swiftly seized the port. The Rangers scrambled up the steep bluff, topped with pink and white villas overlooking the beach, and spread through the streets of the town, rounding up a few bewildered defenders. The Germans had had no time to demolish the port facilities. Except for a gap in the mole and some battered buildings along the waterfront (damage caused by Allied bombers), the only obstacles were a few small vessels sunk in the harbor. Later in the morning the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion advanced east along the shore road and by 1015 occupied Nettuno. Northwest of Anzio the landing of the British 1 Division was equally un-

opposed, although delayed by poor beach conditions. By noon of D Day VI Corps had reached all its preliminary objectives ashore.

In support of the landing, Allied fighter and bomber squadrons flew more than 1,200 sorties on D Day. Medium and heavy bombers blasted key bridges and such road junctions as Cisterna and Velletri in an attempt to block the main roads leading toward the Anzio area. Fighter-bombers, fighters, and night intruders ranged these highways, bombing and strafing the enemy traffic beginning to surge toward the beachhead. Other fighters gave continuous air cover to the landing force. Enemy air attacks were comparatively slight on D Day, totaling 140 sorties, but increased in intensity on 23 January.



PUTTING DOWN ROAD MATTING at the beach exits was one of the problems confronting the engineers after the landings. Many heavy vehicles and the rapid supply build-up made the construction of a number of such roadways necessary.

Behind the assault troops pushing inland, unloading of the initial convoy proceeded at a rapid pace. Engineers swiftly cleared the scattered mine fields and bulldozed exit roads across the dunes; but the clay soil between the beaches and the main road soon became so badly rutted that matting, corduroy, and rock had to be laid down to make the area passable. DUKW's and small craft scurried back and forth across the calm waters of Nettuno Bay, busily unloading the larger craft which were unable to approach the shallow beach. In spite of sporadic shelling after daylight from a few long-range German batteries inland and three small hit-and-run raids by Luftwaffe fighter-bombers, the 540th Engineers quickly moved streams of men and supplies across the beach. A mine sweeper hit a mine and one LCI was sunk by the bombs, but this was the only major damage. The 36th Engineers began clearing the debris from the port of Anzio; the Navy hauled away the sunken vessels. By early afternoon the port was ready to handle LST's and other craft. When the British beach northwest of Anzio proved to be too shallow for effective use, it was closed and British unloading switched to the newly opened port. By midnight of D Day some 36,000 men, 3,200 vehicles,

and large quantities of supplies were ashore, roughly 90 percent of the equipment and personnel of the assault convoy.

Casualties for D Day were light. Thirteen killed, ninety-seven wounded, and forty-four captured or missing were reported to VI Corps. Two hundred and twenty-seven prisoners were taken. Against negligible opposition VI Corps had reached its preliminary objectives and captured almost intact the port of Anzio, which was to be the key channel for supplies.

Expanding the Beachhead

Having reached its preliminary objectives by noon of D Day, VI Corps moved forward to occupy the ground within the planned initial beachhead line. The British 1 Division advanced from its beaches on the left toward the Moletta River and gained control of seven miles of the Albano road. In the 3d Division sector the advance resolved itself into a series of actions to gain the bridges over the Mussolini Canal, vital to the defense of the right side of the beachhead.

By the evening of D Day, advance guards of the 30th Infantry and the 3d Reconnaissance Troop





UNLOADING AT ANZIO'S DOCKS began D Day afternoon when the engineers cleared the harbor. LST's (left) were able to nose directly into the docks and soon afterward British troops (above) were moving through the battered port instead of over the shallow northern beaches.

had seized all of the bridges across the canal. The enemy regained most of the bridges that night in attacks by aggressive, tank-supported attacks launched by elements of the *Hermann Goering Panzer Division*. The next morning Lt. Col. Lionel C. McGarr, commander of the 30th Infantry, brought up the remainder of his regiment, supported by tanks and tank destroyers; in sharp fighting it drove the enemy back across the bridges

along the west branch. The Germans counter-attacked with three tanks and a half-track to regain the bridge on the Cisterna road north of Conca, but the 30th Infantry's supporting armor drove them off. On the right of the 30th Infantry, the 504th Parachute Infantry, which had come ashore in Corps reserve, on 24 January relieved the 3d Reconnaissance Troop along the main canal and retook the other lost bridges.

By 24 January the 3d Division had occupied the right sector of the initial beachhead along the Mussolini Canal. The 504th Parachute Infantry held the right flank along the main canal; in the center the 15th Infantry, and on its left the 30th Infantry, faced Cisterna along the west branch. Ranger Force relieved all but the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, on the division left in the quiet central beachhead sector. Meanwhile the 2 Brigade of the 1 Division, under the command of Brig. E. E. J. Moore, rounded out its sector of the beachhead by advancing to the Moletta River line. The remainder of the division was held in Corps reserve in anticipation of an enemy counterattack. In two days VI Corps had secured a beachhead seven miles deep against only scattered opposition.

Although the Anzio landing and initial Allied build-up were virtually unopposed by German land forces, the enemy reacted swiftly to meet the emergency. Headquarters of *Army Group C* immediately alerted elements of the 4th Parachute and

Hermann Goering Panzer Divisions south of Rome and ordered them to defend the roads leading from Anzio toward Colli Laziali. At 0600 on 22 January it set in motion the prearranged plan to rush troops from outside of Italy to stem the Allied invasion. Two divisions and many lesser units started at once from France, Yugoslavia, and Germany itself. Three divisions of the *Fourteenth Army* in northern Italy were alerted and left for the Rome area on 22-23 January. To command the defense, *I Parachute Corps* reestablished its headquarters in the area below Rome at 1700 on 22 January. All available reserves from the southern front or on their way to it were rushed toward Anzio; these included the 3d *Panzer Grenadier* and 71st *Infantry Divisions*, and the bulk of the *Hermann Goering Panzer Division*. While these forces were assembling, the German Air Force bombed the beachhead area and its supporting naval craft in order to delay an Allied advance inland. For the first two days, the German defenders believed that

ADVANCING TOWARD THE MUSSOLINI CANAL, *elements of the 504th Parachute Infantry on D plus 2 moved in small groups and then only when protected by smoke screens. The canal is just beyond the smoke on the horizon, about 1,000 yards from the building in the foreground.*



they were too weak to stop an Allied advance against Colli Laziali; but from the evening of 24 January they were confident that they could contain the beachhead forces and, as soon as they had substantially completed their concentration, launch a counterattack that would wipe out the Allied beachhead.

Army Group C on 24 January ordered the *Fourteenth Army* to take over the command of the German operations before Anzio. When the *Fourteenth Army*, commanded by Gen. Eberhard von Mackensen, assumed control on 25 January, elements of eight German divisions were employed in the defense line around the beachhead, and five more divisions with many supporting units were on their way to the Anzio area. By 28 January, *Fourteenth Army* had assigned command of the forces defending the eastern sector of the beachhead perimeter (before Cisterna) to the *Hermann Goering Panzer Division*; of the central sector (before Campoleone) to the *3d Panzer Grenadier Division*; and of the western sector (behind the Moletta River) to the *65th Infantry Division*. Behind this perimeter other units were grouped for counterattack. A gap of four or five miles separated the German main line of resistance from the main beachhead line occupied by the Allied VI Corps by 24 January.

The reaction of enemy forces gave no impetus to main Fifth Army's drive and made the prospect of linking the southern force with the beachhead remote. Also, if VI Corps extended itself too far inland toward Colli Laziali, its main objective, it would risk being cut off by a sudden German counterthrust. Before the end of D Day the Germans were estimated to have 20,000 troops in areas from which they could drive rapidly toward the beachhead. With the advantage of good communications, roads, and railroads, and in spite of Allied air interdiction, they had doubled that figure by D plus 2, and continued to increase it to more than 70,000 by D plus 7. This growing strength indicated that VI Corps would have to prepare to meet an enemy thrust calculated to drive the Allied forces back into the sea.

VI Corps consequently consolidated its positions during the period 24-29 January. While awaiting reinforcements, Allied troops probed along the two main axes of advance toward the intermediate objectives of Cisterna and Campoleone, which would serve as strategic jump-off points for the advance on Colli Laziali. On the right the 3d Division moved up the roads leading across the Mussolini Canal toward Cisterna; on the left the British pushed up the Albano road toward Campoleone.⁶ (Map No. 4.)

On the afternoon of 24 January, four companies of the 15th and 30th Infantry made a preliminary reconnaissance in force toward Cisterna, but they were unable to make much headway against strong enemy mobile elements. General Truscott then ordered an advance in greater force at dawn on 25 January up the two main roads leading across the muddy fields toward the town. The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, advanced up the left-hand or Campomorto-Cisterna road, while the 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, took the right up the Conca-Cisterna road.

About two miles beyond the canal the 30th Infantry was halted by a company of the *Hermann Goering Panzer Division*, intrenched around the road junction halfway to Ponte Rotto. On the right of the 30th Infantry, the 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, gained one and one-half miles up the Conca-Cisterna road before it was stopped by German machine gunners concealed within the farm-houses along the route. Tanks and tank destroyers of the 751st Tank Battalion and the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion were brought up to reduce these strong points. Before the armor could go into action German units infiltrated down a stream bed forcing the outposts along the 2d Battalion's right flank to withdraw. Company C, which was making a diversionary attack up a parallel road to the right of the Conca-Cisterna road, bogged down before similar resistance and four of its accompanying tanks were lost to an enemy self-

⁶Campoleone Station. The town of Campoleone is about a mile and a quarter north. References to Campoleone throughout this study are to the railroad station, not to the town proper.

propelled gun. With unexpected strength the veteran *Hermann Goering Panzer Division* had blunted the spearheads of the 3d Division attack. Not having time to prepare fixed defenses, the Germans had emplaced machine guns and anti-tank guns in every farmhouse along the roads. These strong points had excellent interlocking fields of fire across the gently rolling fields and were supported by roving tanks and self-propelled guns. They had to be knocked out one by one by American tanks and tank destroyers before the infantry could advance.

To assist the main effort, paratroopers of the 504th Parachute Infantry made a diversionary attack across the main canal toward Littoria. Advancing behind a heavy curtain of supporting fires, augmented by the guns of the cruiser *Brooklyn* and two destroyers, they captured the villages of Borgo Sabotino, Borgo Piave, and Sessano on the east side of the canal. Company D, however, was cut off beyond Borgo Piave by a surprise counter-thrust of five tanks and eight *flakwagons* (self-propelled antiaircraft guns) of the *Hermann Goer-*

ing Panzer Division. Company D lost heavily, though many of the men managed to infiltrate back. That night the 504th Parachute Infantry, leaving behind strong combat patrols, withdrew from its exposed positions.

The 3d Division resumed its push toward Cisterna the next morning, 26 January. In the 30th Infantry zone the 1st Battalion infiltrated around the road junction below Ponto Rotto where it had been held up, and forced the enemy to withdraw. That afternoon the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry thrust northeast up the right-hand road across the west branch of the canal to establish a road block on the Cisterna-Littoria road. In spite of seventy minutes of massed supporting fire from the 9th, 10th, and 39th Field Artillery Battalions, and neutralizing fire by heavier guns, the Germans clung tenaciously to their positions. Behind a similar elaborate artillery preparation, the 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, on 27 January pushed up the Conca-Cisterna road. At the same time the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, continued its attack on the right. It gained some ground but was unable to break

THE RIGHT FLANK AT THE MUSSOLINI CANAL was covered by the 504th Parachute Infantry, dug in on the east bank. This position was west of Littoria, toward which a diversionary attack was launched in support of the 3d Division on 25 January.





ENEMY SHELLFIRE HITTING THE BEACHES *did not halt the work of DUKW's which carried supplies from Liberty ships offshore. This sporadic shelling was considered a nuisance, but caused only limited damage.*

through to its objective. Rushing new units into the line piecemeal as fast as they arrived, the Germans were making every effort to keep the Americans from reaching Highway No. 7. In the attacks of 25-27 January the 3d Division reached positions one to two miles beyond the west branch of the Mussolini Canal; it was still three miles from Cisterna. It became evident that an effort greater than was immediately possible would be necessary to reach the division's objective. General Truscott therefore called a halt in the advance to regroup for a more concentrated drive.

To parallel the drive of the 3d Division, the British 1 Division had been ordered to move up the Albano road to Campoleone, to secure this im-

portant road and railway junction as a jump-off point for a further advance. With the arrival of the 179th Regimental Combat Team (45th Division), VI Corps released from Corps reserve the 24 Guards Brigade for this move. A strong mobile patrol up the road on 24 January surprised an enemy outpost at Carroceto and continued four miles farther inland to a point north of Campoleone. To exploit this apparent enemy weakness, General Penney on 25 January dispatched the 24 Guards Brigade, with one squadron of the 46 Royal Tanks and one medium and two field regiments of artillery in support, to take the Factory (Aprilia) near Carroceto. The 3d Battalion, 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (3d Panzer Grenadier Division),

however, had occupied the Factory the night before. The 1 Scots Guards and 1 Irish Guards pushed through a hasty mine field across the road, and the 5 Grenadier Guards then drove the enemy from the Factory, capturing 111 prisoners. (Map No. 4)

The enemy, sensitive to the loss of this strong point, counterattacked strongly the next morning. Twenty tanks and a battalion of the *29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment* thrust at the 5 Grenadier Guards in the Factory. Their main assault was repulsed, but they continued to feel around the flanks until they were finally driven off that afternoon. The Germans left behind four burning tanks, one self-propelled gun, and forty-six more prisoners. By the morning of 28 January the 24 Guards Brigade had advanced one and one-half miles north of the Factory. The 1 Division then paused to regroup for an attack on Campoleone.

By 29 January, VI Corps had expanded its beachhead by the advances of the 1 and 3d Division, but was still from two to four miles short of its two intermediate objectives. It was clear that an attack in greater strength would be necessary to continue the drive. The Corps paused to regroup. (Map No. 5.)

Behind the assault troops pushing inland, engineers and service troops worked day and night to organize the beachhead and prepare a firm base for the main attack. Roads were repaired, dumps established, and a beginning made on defenses to meet any future German counterthrusts. The port, vital to the supply build-up and troop reinforcement, was placed in such effective operation that by 1 February it could handle 8 LST's, 8 LCT's, and 5 LCI's simultaneously. Liberty ships, however, were unable to enter the shallow harbor and continued to be unloaded by DUKW's and LCT's over X-Ray and Yellow Beaches. The weather during the first week at Anzio turned out much better than anticipated and greatly facilitated the stockage of supplies. The port was usable in all but the worst weather, and only on two days during the first week, 24 and 26 January, was unloading over the beaches halted by high winds and surf. A gale during the night of 26 January blew ashore all ponton

causeways and beached 12 LCT's, 1 LST, and 1 LCI. In spite of these interruptions and enemy interference, 201 LST's and 7 Liberty ships had been completely unloaded by 31 January. On the peak day of 29 January 6,350 tons were unloaded: 3,155 tons through the port, 1,935 over X-Ray Beach, and 1,260 over Yellow Beach.

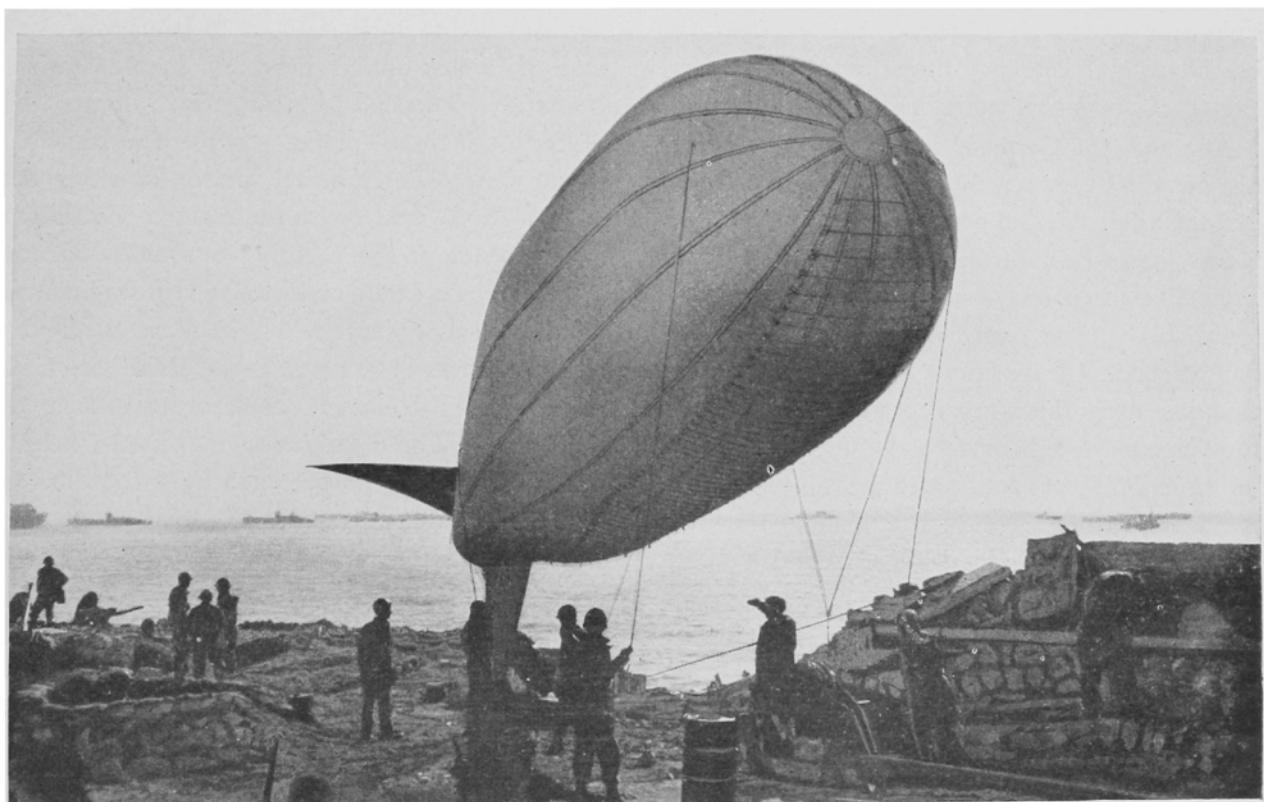
The beach and port areas, still within range of German artillery, were vulnerable targets for increasing shelling. Long-range 88-mm. and 170-mm. batteries dropped their shells sporadically on ships off shore and among troops working along the beach. Although this fire was a nuisance to the troops and interfered with work, it caused only limited damage in the early days. Floating mines continued to be a menace, damaging a destroyer and a mine sweeper. On 24 January an LST carrying Companies C and D, 83d Chemical Battalion, struck a mine. Most of the men were transferred to an LCI alongside, which also hit a mine and sank. Total casualties were 5 officers and 289 men.

Far more dangerous to beach and shipping were the constant Luftwaffe raids. The German Air Force put up its biggest air effort since Sicily in an attempt to cut off Allied supplies. Small flights of fighter-bombers strafed and bombed the beach and port areas every few hours. The most serious threat, however, was the raiding by medium bomber squadrons hastily brought back from Greece and the torpedo and glider bombers from airfields in southern France. Skimming in low at dusk from the sea through the smoke and hail of ack-ack fire, they released bombs, torpedoes, and radio-controlled glider bombs on the crowded shipping in the harbor. In three major raids, on 23, 24, and 26 January, they sank a British destroyer and a hospital ship, damaged another hospital ship, and beached a Liberty ship. The two heaviest raids came at dusk and midnight on 29 January, when 110 Dornier 217's, Junkers 88's, and Messerschmitt 210's sank a Liberty ship and the British antiaircraft cruiser *Spartan*.

Stiffening air defenses took a heavy toll of the Luftwaffe raiders, downing ninety-seven of them before 1 February. Initially Col. Edgar W. King



ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS AND BARRAGE BALLOONS *appeared in increasing numbers as the German air raiders stepped up their attacks. The crew above mans a 40-mm. Bofors gun. Shown below is one of the low-level type balloons designed to counter strafing attacks.*



of the 68th Coast Artillery Regiment (Antiaircraft) and later Brig. Gen. Aaron A. Bradshaw, Jr., supervised the installation of increasing numbers of 40-mm. and 90-mm. antiaircraft guns and established a 12,000-yard inner artillery zone around the vital beach and port areas. Barrage balloons were raised to halt low-level bombing and smoke screens blanketed the port at dusk and on every red alert. The enemy's favorite tactic was to sneak over at dusk, when Allied planes, which needed daylight to take off, were returning to their 100-mile distant bases. To combat these sneak raids the engineers renovated the old Italian artillery school air strip at Nettuno. P-40's of the 307th Fighter Squadron moved up to the beachhead to furnish "on the spot" cover, and the Air Force increased its use of Beaufighter night patrols and Spitfires trained for night fighting.

Good weather during most of the first week at Anzio and the aid rendered by use of the port enabled the assault convoy to be unloaded rapidly and turned around to bring up the follow-up force. The 45th Division and the 1st Armored Division (less Combat Command B, which was retained for possible employment at Cassino) had reached the beachhead by 1 February. Essential Corps artillery, engineers, and signal troops had also arrived.

Although the Germans in the Anzio area outnumbered VI Corps by 30 January, it was believed that their defenses had not progressed beyond road blocks, hasty field fortifications, and mine fields along likely avenues of approach. Allied patrols could still operate freely to Highway No. 7 and Campoleone. The positions the enemy was constructing along the railroad between Campoleone and Cisterna were believed to be intended for delaying action. It was anticipated that his main stand against an Allied advance would more likely be along the high ground around Cori and Velletri.

In view of the rapidly increasing enemy build-up, General Lucas decided to launch his drive toward Colli Laziali before his forces might be too far

outnumbered. On 30 January the enemy forces in the beachhead area were estimated to number 71,500; VI Corps had 61,332 troops ashore on the same date. It was planned to resume the 3d Division push on Cisterna on 29 January, but the attack was delayed one day to permit the 1 Division and the 1st Armored Division to complete preparations for a coordinated offensive. On 30 January all three divisions were to attack.

The drive of VI Corps out of the Anzio beachhead was designed to coincide with a renewed offensive on the southern front. On main Fifth Army's front, II Corps was preparing to open its drive on Cassino on 1 February, with the 34th Division carrying the attack. The 10 Corps in the Garigliano sector continued the consolidation of the bridgehead which it had successfully established in an attack on 17-20 January. On the Eighth Army front the Canadian 1 Division was to attack in the coastal sector on 30 January.

The Germans originally planned to counterattack the Allied beachhead in force on 28 January. But Allied bombings of roads and railways, and a desire to await the arrival of reinforcements from Germany, led to a decision on 26 January to postpone the attack until 1 February. In preparation, the enemy proceeded to arrange his infantry and artillery into three combat groups. The principal assault was to be launched southward along the Albano-Anzio road (with the main concentration on either side of the Factory) by *Combat Group Graeser*, which would consist of seventeen infantry battalions heavily supported by artillery. While the main effort was to be made in the center, the Germans planned to launch simultaneous attacks all along the front on the morning of D Day, 1 February; these were to be preceded by a coordinated 10-minute artillery barrage. While the necessary regroupings were under way, Allied VI Corps launched its offensive on 30 January forcing the Germans to postpone their attack until after the Allied drive had been stopped.